

# FAQs: The Cruise Community and COVID-19

Updated 13 August 2020

## Are cruise ships the source of COVID-19?

Cruising is neither the source nor the cause of COVID-19. In fact, with over 20 million cases confirmed worldwide, cases of COVID-19 on cruise ships represent a fraction of a fraction of a percent of confirmed cases around the world.

Like restaurants, hotels, movie theaters and the like, COVID-19 can spread in any setting where people come together to socialize and enjoy shared experiences. It also spreads in other transportation and hospitality sectors where people have close contact with others who are infected, such as airlines, subways and trains, buses and ride share vehicles.

However, cruise ships do differ from other sectors and industries in ways that contribute to the misperception perpetuated in the media that the incidence of COVID-19 is higher than other sectors and industries. All CLIA ocean-going cruise lines (which represents 95% of global cruise ship capacity) must have credentialed doctors and nurses onboard who are required to provide health declarations detailing illnesses of individuals onboard to port authorities around the globe prior to a ship's entry. The majority of this information is available to the public. Neither airlines, hotels, nor any other travel and tourism sector is required to report the same information.

## What will be different when cruising resumes?

With input from outside public health and medical experts, the cruise industry is taking a holistic approach to planning for COVID-19 safety. One theme that continues to emerge in these conversations is the concept of a "door-to-door" strategy, beginning at the time of booking through the return of passengers to their homes.

The cruise industry is also exploring more robust screening protocols, expanded cleaning and sanitation practices for ships and comprehensive shipboard prevention, surveillance and response measures. Additional concepts that continue to be explored include:

- **Enhanced screening of passengers and crew**
- **Appropriate distancing measures as required and appropriate at the time of resumption of operations**
- **Modified or eliminated buffets as necessary**
- **Potential solutions to challenges related to shoreside excursions, with the objective of helping to prevent the unintentional spread of the virus**
- **Enhanced medical capabilities, in addition to the medical facilities and personnel already onboard (something that is unique to the cruise industry as it relates to travel/passenger transportation)**
- **Care and training of crew on all new and enhanced protocols**
- **Pre-arranged options for medical evacuations with consideration of impacts on local healthcare systems**

## How do CLIA member cruise lines promote public health?

Interestingly, CLIA ocean-going cruise ships are the only form of travel or passenger transportation that

must be medically equipped to care for passengers or crew in the event of illness. As a condition of membership within CLIA, ocean-going cruise lines are required to fit their ships with medical facilities that meet the standards set forth by the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP), which require that doctors and medical personnel be available onboard 24/7. Additionally, cruise ships must have an examination room, an intensive care room and equipment for processing labs, monitoring vital signs and administering medications.

### How do CLIA cruise lines keep cruise ships clean and sanitary?

Keeping cruise ships clean and sanitary is a top priority for CLIA member cruise lines. Cruise ship crews clean and sanitize surfaces known for transmitting germs, multiple times throughout the day, such as handrails, door handles and faucets. At the end of a voyage and before a new one begins, ships are cleaned completely prior to the arrival of new passengers. CLIA cruise lines also help to educate cruise passengers on personal health and safety practices. Cruise passengers are reminded to wash their hands regularly and hand sanitizers are readily available in public locations. While this longstanding cruise line practice may sound minor, COVID-19 has reaffirmed the critical importance of hand hygiene to protecting public health.

Additionally, the industry has a longstanding collaboration with the CDC and The [Vessel Sanitation Program](#) (VSP) to make sure ships meet strict sanitation guidelines. As part of the program, cruise ship crews are trained in sanitation and health practices and ships undergo unannounced inspections twice a year, with scores made available to the public. No other travel and tourism or entertainment industry has this type of federal program or oversight.

### What is the economic impact of the suspension of cruise operations?

Cruise activity supports over 1.17 million jobs across a wide cross-section of industries and sectors, from ground and air transportation to food and beverage, lodging, manufacturing, hotels, professional services and a broad range of suppliers and service providers throughout the world. Unfortunately, the impacts of COVID-19 are being felt across this vast community, with up to 2,500 jobs lost each day that cruises are not operating. When the time is right for cruise operations to safely resume, cruising will be an important contributor to fueling the global economic and societal recovery.

Below are some additional facts about the economic impact of the cruise industry and the impact of the ongoing suspension of passenger operations.

#### Worldwide Economic Impact:

- The cruise industry generates over **\$150 billion USD** in worldwide economic activity and supports nearly **1.2 million** jobs.
- Every **1%** drop in cruising that occurs worldwide results in up to 9,100 lost jobs.
- Each day of the suspension results in the loss of up to 2,500 jobs worldwide.
- From mid-March, when the suspension of cruise operations began, through the end of September, the worldwide impact will be a loss of **\$50 billion USD** in economic activity, **334,000** jobs and **\$15 billion USD** in wages.

#### United States:

- The cruise industry generates over **\$53 billion USD** in economic activity in the U.S. and supports **421,000** American jobs.
- Every **30** cruisers from U.S. ports support **one** American job.
- Each day of the suspension of cruise operations in the U.S. results in a total loss of approximately **\$110 million** in economic activity and up to **800** American jobs.

- From mid-March, when the suspension began, through the end of September, we estimate that the suspension of cruise passenger operations will result in a total loss of **163,700** direct and indirect American jobs and **\$8.6 billion** in total wages

#### Europe:

- The cruise industry generates **53 € billion** in economic activity in Europe and supports **435,000** European jobs.
- Every **1%** drop in cruising from Europe results in up to **3,500** jobs lost.
- Each day of the suspension results in the loss of up to **1,000** jobs in Europe.
- From mid-March, when the suspension began, through the end of September, we estimate that the suspension of cruise operations will result in a total loss of **215,800** direct and indirect European jobs and **6.7 € billion** in total wages.

#### Canada:

- The cruise industry generates **\$4.1 billion CAD** in economic activity in Canada and supports more than **29,000** Canadian jobs.
- Every **1%** drop in cruising in Canada results in up to **300** jobs lost.
- Each day of the suspension results in the loss of up to **100** Canadian jobs.
- From mid-March, when the suspension began, through the end of September, we estimate that the suspension of cruise operations will result in a total loss of **20,500** direct and indirect Canadian jobs and **\$1.09 billion CAD** in total wages.

For more information about the economic impact of the cruise industry worldwide, please visit: [CLIA 2018 Economic Analysis](#).

### What are cruise lines doing to plan for a return to cruise operations?

CLIA cruise line members are using this time to explore new ideas and concepts to further enhance already stringent public health protocols and policies with the input of outside medical and public health experts and in coordination with local, national and international authorities. Additionally, caring for and repatriating crewmembers has been a top priority for CLIA cruise line members, especially in light of the complexities involved due to travel restrictions and differing policies and approaches imposed by local and national governments around the world.

### How can members of the wider cruise community submit a comment to the CDC?

Collaboration with governments and health authorities around the world is a key part of the planning process for the resumption of cruising. This is also an area that will greatly benefit from the valuable insights and perspectives of the wider cruise community.

To that end, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently issued a [Request for Information](#) (RFI) related to the resumption of cruise operations, which offers an opportunity for members of the public—including the wider cruise community—to share their feedback directly with the CDC. Below is some additional information related to the RFI and how to respond.

- To submit comments in response to the CDC's RFI, please click [HERE](#).
- Anyone who is impacted can submit comments—this includes travel advisors, suppliers, port operators and workers, service providers, etc.
- American citizenship is not a requirement.

- Comments should respond directly to the CDC's questions, but do not need to respond to every single individual question.
- Include agency name (CDC) and Docket Number in your response: CDC-2020-0087.
- Share how you and your clients have been affected by the suspension of cruise operations and/or how you would be affected (positively or negatively) by proposals in the RFI.
- Comments are due by 11:59 ET on 21 September 2020.
- Be professional. Take a fact-based approach to expressing your view.

### **Is CLIA leading an effort to establish industry-wide protocols for ocean-going members to resume operations?**

CLIA is working to establish an industry-wide COVID-19 policy for its ocean-going cruise line members. Our efforts are being informed by the very detailed work being performed by the ocean-going lines, in which CLIA is actively engaged. Once agreed upon by CLIA ocean-going cruise line members, the policy will be added to CLIA's compendium of policies required of all CLIA ocean-going cruise line members.

### **Until when are CLIA cruise lines voluntarily suspending U.S. passenger operations?**

CLIA ocean-going cruise lines made the decision on 5 August 2020 to voluntarily extend the ongoing suspension of U.S. passenger operations until at least 31 October 2020 with the understanding that we will revisit a possible further extension on or before 30 September 2020. Should conditions in the U.S. change, and it becomes possible to consider short, modified sailings, we would consider an earlier restart. This would be pursued in consultation with the CDC and other policymakers.

The industry announcement is not intended to prohibit any member from applying a longer extension based on each company's unique itineraries, demographics, and other circumstances.

### **Why did CLIA cruise lines voluntarily decide to extend the suspension of passenger operations from the United States?**

Although we found the alignment between CLIA's previous voluntary suspension to 15 September and the CDC's current No-Sail Order date of 30 September valuable, we feel a further extension is prudent and will allow for the consideration of CDC's RFI input that is due on 21 September. The spike in COVID-19 cases is, of course, an additional factor.

### **Which cruise ships are affected by the voluntary suspension of U.S. passenger operations?**

The voluntary suspension applies to all CLIA members to which the CDC No Sail Order applies (vessels with capacity to carry 250 persons or more).

### **Why have some cruise line companies extended their suspensions of U.S. passenger operations beyond 31 October?**

There are several factors that will influence the timing of the resumption of cruise voyages. In addition to the CDC No Sail Order, ports around the globe need to be open for tourism. Global travel restrictions could also be a factor. We recognize some cruise lines are currently sailing on limited itineraries.

### **Why has cruising returned in Asia and Europe but not North America?**

Cruises are resuming in other markets in a gradual, phased-in manner, since the virus is at different

stages in different parts of the world. At least in some regions, we have seen the first cruises are shorter voyages with more limited itineraries. Cruise lines remain actively engaged with our partners at the local, national and international levels to facilitate alignment and inform cruise industry protocols as they advance through the planning process.

### **When did CLIA cruise lines first suspend passenger operations due to COVID-19?**

CLIA cruise lines responded swiftly to this unprecedented global crisis based on the information that was available, and under the guidance of prevailing health authorities. This culminated in the voluntary suspension of worldwide cruise passenger operations in mid-March, immediately following the World Health Organization's pandemic declaration.

### **When will passenger operations resume?**

CLIA ocean-going member cruise lines will sail again when the time is right, and that timing will be based on a number of factors, including, most importantly, input from scientists and medical experts. Given the significant economic contributions of the cruise industry to global economies, CLIA member cruise lines look forward to contributing to the global economic and societal recoveries, in addition to welcoming valued guests back onboard and introducing them to their next adventures.

### **Will the cruise industry recover?**

Our colleagues across the cruise industry, and the communities we serve, are facing a challenge that is unprecedented in scale. The global cruise industry supports over 1.17 million jobs around the world, including travel agents, suppliers, and service providers across a wide spectrum of industries and sectors. Unfortunately, every day of the suspension results in thousands of those jobs lost. Still, people love to cruise, and that is part of what makes the cruise industry so resilient in the face of adversity. We are confident that people will return to the seas when the time is right, just as they will return to restaurants, bars, movie theaters and the like. Despite current challenges, the cruise community will emerge from this global crisis stronger and even better than before.